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S E R M O N S.

PREACHED BY

T H O M A S S T O R Y,

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J O H N G U R N E Y,

In the M E E T I N G S

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The P E O P L E called Q U A K E R S,

L O N D O N:

P R I N T E D in the Y E A R

M. DCC. LXXXV.



THOMAS STORY'S
DISCOURSE,

IN THE

MEETING AT HORSELYDOWN,

On the 26th Day of February, 1737,

Concerning the Diversity of Opinions and Divisions in Religion, still subsisting in the Christian World.

With an Observation, that the Unity of Christians never did, nor never will, or can stand in Uniformity of Thought, or Opinion, but in Christian Love only, &c.

WE may observe, and that with deep concern of mind, the great variety of notions and opinions, the manifold differences, divisions and uncharitableness, still subsisting and prevailing in the Christian world; yet this variety and difference would not be so hurtful as it is, if we could retain, or arrive at that social friendship and Christian charity one towards another, which the nature and end of that religion we all profess, does require and demand: but the variety of opinions, especially in matters of religion, have commonly been accompanied with personal and party dislike, uncharitableness,

ness, and, too often, even hatred of those who differ from us in our sentiments that way. Our various manners of thinking depend upon our several interests, ways of education, or different degrees of understanding; so that upon the main, it is not in our power to think or believe as we please, or so as to please others, or otherwise than we do, until we are better informed; and we ought to use all lawful and proper ways and means to be rightly informed. But this is no new thing, it hath been so from the beginning of the Christian dispensation, and all a-long. We may find it was so in the days of the apostles, people professing the one, true and living God, and the Lord Christ the Son of God, differed widely at that time, in some things. And we may also observe the great influence, and effect, which education, and early impressions, have upon most people. Impressions of religion, or what are so esteemed, take with us very early, and there are many who embrace unsound opinions and principles in time of youth, which they retain to the end of their days, if they live in the world many years; and if any errors obtain with us when we are young in years and judgment, they are hardly rooted out: nothing can effectually do it, but the clear manifestations of the divine light of the essential truth in the understanding.

Errors in education are commonly continued by negligence, under a self-security; many being unwilling to come to a strict and painful inquiry into their own principles and states. But if a man's religion be right, it will endure the strictest scrutiny, and if upon a due search
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it appears *to him* to be wrong, he ought to recede from it, and retain or embrace nothing but the truth: there is as great a mixture of errors in the Christian world at this day, as any time heretofore. And mankind are apt to be so tenacious of their acquired and imbibed notions (if most heterodox), so censorious of others, and so confident and forward are they to judge in favour of themselves, that wanting charity, the most necessary point, they, as unjust judges, are ready to exclude all others of a different way of thinking and profession, even out of the favour and kingdom of God.—That is a very dangerous state indeed; but contrary to this, I remember what the apostle Peter said, and I believe it is altogether true; “Of a truth, “I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted “with him.” Acts, ch. x. ver. 34. This is our sentiment: we have never pretended that religion is only among us, exclusive of others; for my own part, I do believe, and may say, I partly understand, that there are some among every sect, that might be named, to whom God hath regard: they who mind the fear of God, and are religious, doing their utmost according to their knowledge to please him, are accepted of him, under what name soever they are distinguished in the world: and according to that saying of Christ, “In my Father’s house “are many mansions,” John xiv. ver. 2. By which we may understand the various classes, in which the children of men are ranged and disposed, in the course of Providence.

God is the Creator of all, the supporter, supplier and assister of all, and it is sincerity in the heart, truth in the inward parts, that God looks at, rather than to the exactness and nicety of our speculations or opinions.

Divers errors, and false opinions, have been introduced and propagated by tradition among the Jews, before the coming of Christ in the flesh; and though some of them believed that he was the Messiah, and acknowledged him as such, yet many rejected him as a deceiver, till after he was crucified, risen from the dead, and the Holy Spirit dispensed unto them who believed; that the promises and predictions of God by Moses and the prophets might be accomplished: and though many of that people did afterwards believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and were made partakers of the promise of the Father by him, that is, of the Holy Ghost, who leadeth into all truth, yet they were not led unto all truth in an instant; they were not perfect either in sanctification or understanding at once; for there are degrees of manifestation, and attainments in the spirit, and spiritual knowledge and things, so that many of them continued for a time in some of their old opinions and traditions, not of the nature of the gospel of Christ, which remain among some professing Christ until this day. And many more pernicious errors have, in the course of ages, been invented and added, and have obtained since in the Christian world, and still subsist and are maintained, and ever will, until the spirit of Christ, the essential truth of God, as he is believed in, and duly attended and obeyed, as manifested

manifested in the hearts of mankind, clear their understandings from all mistakes and errors, as he gradually sanctifies their hearts and minds from all corruption. There is one instance, in the days of the apostles, more particularly in my remembrance, whereby it appears, that though some of the Jews did believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Messiah promised, yet they were still of opinion the law was in force, and were so tenacious of it, that some of them, who preached Christ, likewise taught, that, unless they were circumcised, and kept the law, they could not be saved; when, at the same time, it was abrogated and null by his coming, and in which they also insincerely temporised, for fear of persecution by their perverse and unbelieving brethren, Gal. ch. vii. ver. 12, 13. Acts, ch. xv. ver. 1, 5, & 24.

But the apostle Paul, a chosen vessel of honour unto God, a man excellently illuminated, a man of sincerity and truth, and holy fortitude and courage, having no other view in preaching the gospel, but the glory and honour of God and Christ, the discharge of the duty of his calling, his own salvation, and the redemption of mankind, bare another testimony, and preached true doctrine, telling them plainly, and particularly the congregation in Galatia, that if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing, and that such were still debtors to do the whole law of Moses, which brought them back from the liberty of the gospel, and that they were falling from grace, Gal. ch. v. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, and see also, Acts, ch. xv. ver. 1. 24. And again, returned under the yoke of

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bondage,

bondage, the law of ceremonies, and cardinal ordinances, under statutes that were not good, Ezek. ch. xx. ver. 25. And by the works of the law shall no man living be justified.

This apostle, as well as the rest of them, having by sound doctrine, condemned that error, proceeds to preach salvation unto them by faith in Christ, by whom alone they could be saved, saying, "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love," Gal. ch. v. ver. 6. Circumcision therefore, or any other ceremony of the law, or other ceremony invented, imitated, and imposed by man, if they continued in them, would be so far from contributing any thing to their salvation, that they would rather hinder, and if they did discontinue the practice of such things, neither would a bare departure from them avail any thing without faith in the Son of God.—Likewise, there are many at this day, who have entered into the profession of the Christian religion occasionally, and received divers *notions* and *opinions* under which they have been *educated*, by tradition only, from their parents and tutors; and some also, by hearing public discourses upon points of doctrine, as they have been accounted, and reading the holy scriptures, and reasoning upon them in their carnal minds, and other books treating of religion, according to the various *notions* of the authors, true or false, and have imbibed and adopted such things as best suited their own way of thinking or imaginations. And others, being altogether *indolent* and *thoughtless*, sit down under

der the *traditions*, or saysoes of their fathers and predeceffors, though *beterodox*, take them for granted, and inquire no further to the end of their days. And some are of opinion, that mankind must of necessity be baptized, or sprinkled with water, in some manner or other, or they cannot be saved; and likewise, that eating and supping bread and wine, in some mode or other, in commemoration of the death and sufferings of Christ, is necessary to salvation, and by which they think they obtain grace from God by him, and by the omission whereof they think men fall short of the performance of the ordinances of God in the gospel.

Now, as long as those persons, whoever they be, and under what denomination soever they go, or in what class soever of Christians they are ranged, so long as they really believe in their hearts they ought to do these things, having been once in use among Christians in the time of their minority in the faith of Christ, they do not sin in practising them, though they may think themselves sinners if they should neglect them.—But if any among such, or others, should, through the goodness of God, be favoured with the divine and inward manifestation of Christ, the eternal and living substance, without the use or performance of those outward things, as there are many so favoured at this day, such are under no obligation at all to use them any more.

And if such, who still remain ignorant of Christ, though they may believe that he is, and is afar off, and will come hereafter, and do
censure,

censure, revile, and vilify, hate and reproach, and otherwise persecute and destroy those who are thus favoured of God, and exempted from the use of those things, they sin against God, notwithstanding the strictest practice of any outward things they may think or call ordinances of Christ: because persecution and destruction, on any pretence whatever, is immoral and antichristian; and such are also contradicting and opposing the work and dispensation of God, and liberty of the gospel, at this day, in and among his children and chosen people. Again, most among us, and likewise many among other professions, have never come under the administration of those outward things at all, in any form, yet are no better by only declining or neglecting them, nor by such omission only are they initiated into our religion, or the profession of those with whom they may happen to be in outward society under any name or distinction. For as at that time, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed any thing to religion, but faith which worketh by love; even so now at this day, neither the administration of water, or bread and wine, in any form, or by whatsoever administrator among the children of men, under any qualification whatsoever, or under whatever circumstances as to time or times, posture or place, availeth any thing; but the same living faith, grounded upon the sensible operation of the word of God, its immediate object in that heart where it is wrought, by the manifestation of divine love.

And

And if we, who profess the truth of God, the true Christian religion, have not obtained this most precious faith, our profession is vain, it is a lie, we are *false witnesses*, yet in our sin, and miserable.—And therefore, let us take the good and safe counsel of that great apostle, to examine ourselves and prove our ownelves (every one for one), whether we be in this faith, and whether Christ be thus in us, lest we profess him in vain to become in us by his holy spirit, and our works give us the lie, and declare we are reprobates: but I trust ye are not reprobates, but rather the saved of the Lord. Dear friends, we can never be too secure, in a thing of the highest importance to us in this world, and that which is to come.

Seeing then this faith is the first main point here proposed, in order to our salvation, it implies, that there must be a proper, powerful, and saving object, to be believed in, and means to obtain it, without which it could not be. Whom, therefore, must we mortals believe and confide in, and unto whom must we look for this faith? for we cannot acquire it by any power, or faculty, or search of our own; we cannot believe what we please, or reject what we will.—This faith is the gift of God, therefore, such as have not through his grace already obtained it, must look unto him only for it. And if we believe any thing of the Christian religion, or in Christ, in any sense or degree (as I doubt not but that we all do) and yet are not arrived at the full experience of the blessed effects of it in our hearts; let such be like minded with him of old, who said unto the
Son

Son of God, in an humble mind and sense of his own weakness, and with good desires of improvement, " Lord, I believe, help thou mine " unbelief," Mark, ch. ix. ver 23, 24.

And as to the object of this faith, the Son of God hath told us, as we have it recorded in holy scripture, " Ye believe in God, believe " also in me," John, ch. xiv. ver. 1. So that the *Father* and the *Son*, the *Lord Christ*, are the *true* and *only objects* of this faith, and they are one, and *he is anticrist that denieth the Father and the Son*, 1st John, ch. 2. ver. 22. But some may have searched the scripture concerning this faith, and believed *there is such a thing*, and read many other books, and considered them, and compared one part of *scripture* with another, and one *book* with another, and what the authors have wrote on this subject; he may with much zeal and good intent, have gone from *meeting to meeting*, and one famed preacher to another, and heard of many good and fine things, delivered with *exact* connection of parts according to *art*, and with very *beautiful* and agreeable *eloquence*, and may have a *large collection* of *points* and *particulars* in his *memory*, and in *notes* and *references*: but does all this give the man *faith* that works by *love*? No, this man may conceive a good opinion of those things he *bears* or *reads*, and may assent in his *head* to matters of fact *reported*, or the *moral truths* of doctrines, and yet be still ignorant of the *gift* of God; and as the woman of Samaria was, though talking with the Saviour of the world, the *author* and *finisher* of that faith, concerning the religions *professed* and *contested* at that

that time, and yet both religions, and the disputers of them, short of the truth.

But the *faith* which the apostle there mentions, as so absolutely needful, is (as I have said) the *gift of God*. It comes by the *operation* of the *Holy Spirit of Christ*, the *word of life*, in the hearts of all mankind who are favoured with it, and this word is in all men; the true and essential divine *light*, which *lighteth* every man that cometh into the world. And when a man doth *feel* the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, *working* in his heart, and *shining* into his mind, and *illuminating* his understanding, the convincing and edifying *wisdom* and *power* of God, Christ who is that wisdom and power, and the *Father* will then be the *immediate* and *present object* of the *faith* and mind of him, who receives it by this *blessed operation*. This is the way by which faith is given of God, though it pleaseth him, in the superaboundings of his goodness and mercy, sometimes to convey or begin this faith in the hearts of men by the ministry of *chosen instruments*, whom he hath fitted to co-operate with him in his own *power*, and under his own immediate direction and conduct: as saith the same apostle, "Though you
" have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet
" have ye not many *fathers*. For in Christ
" Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."
1 Cor. ch. iv. ver. 15.

This *faith*, therefore, is easily understood by mankind, of the lowest capacities as men; they can *feel*, and they can *bear* and *see*, and thereby become fully certain of the *Divine Object*,
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who gives them these senses, who opens their eyes to see him, who otherwise is invisible, to *feel* the sweet *influence* of his divine *love* and goodness, and *bear* the soul-quickenings words of the spirit of life, speaking *salvation* and *immortality* in them, to their unutterable joy and consolation.

They then *believe*, not only respecting the coming of the Son of God in the *Flesh* among the *Jews* in that day, but as *revealed in themselves* in this day; and herein, and not in *hearsay* only, standeth our salvation.

This *faith* is not only *revealed* in us as an *effect* of the love of God, through Christ our Saviour, but it worketh, and increaseth likewise, by *love* on our *part* towards God; and we prove our *love* to him, by leaving off and denying ourselves of whatsoever we see or perceive, by his divine light in our understandings to be wrong, or contrary to his holy will and mind, or not *agreeable* unto the *Lord*, or his attributes, and by our *humility* before him, and *obedience*, not only to all his commandments as written in the book, but also, to all such as we receive from the voice of his quickening word as manifested in our hearts, whether in *saying*, *doing*, or *suffering* for his name and glory, according as he requires.

Thus *faith* worketh, and increaseth also, by *obedience*; that faith which is without *obedience*, worketh not by love, and is not *saving*; for, faith the Son of God, "If a man love me, he
" will keep my words, and my Father will love
" him,

“ him, and we will come unto him, and make
 “ our abode with him,” John, ch. xiv. ver. 23.

True *faith*, working by *love*, overcomes the world, but *feigned* faith, being dead, is *overcome* by the *spirit* of the world through many *lusts*. True *faith* overcomes all the *lusts*, and evil motions of the *flesh*, and of the eye, the evil *passions* of the heart and mind are *overcome*, destroyed and done away thereby.

There is a *cogent* power and *virtue* in this *faith*, by which, as a *shield*, all the fiery darts of the *devil* and his *agents*, and his and their *envy*, within and without, are *quenched* and repelled, according to the doctrine of the apostle upon another occasion, when describing the whole armour of light, the only proper accoutrements of a Christian warrior. This *faith*, I say, overcomes the world, within and without: but *historical* *faith*, where there is only that, or that which comes by *tradition* only, is overcome by the world, and the spirit of it; how much more, therefore, are they overcome thereby, who have no faith? Which is the case of all *persecutors*, for they who are only born after the flesh, always, one way or another, by word or action, and often by their *laws* and *ordinances*, *persecute* them who are born, first after the flesh, and afterward after the spirit. And yet the faithful in Christ (who overcame the world by suffering), also overcome in and by him, of whom they are born, though the world be full of enemies, spiritual and temporal, and of spiritual wickedness in high places and stations

tions in the earth, fortified by the weapons of the evil one.

This faith, the Son of God points at, where he saith, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, 'remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.'" That is to say, if we mortals have this faith which works by love, whatever *difficulties* and *temptations* we find in our way and progress, through this vexatious and troublesome world, it overcomes and removes them all, and smoothes our way, so that we may walk forward to the end of our journey to eternal rest, without falling.

Now, as we go along, let a serious consideration pass through every mind this evening, and let us all examine ourselves; what do we know of this faith? This lays hold of the *saving power of Christ by love*, as the same apostle also saith in another place, "By grace, ye are *saved*, through *faith*, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," Ephes. ch. ii. ver. 8. Seeing then that grace which saves, and that faith by which we adhere to that grace, are the *gifts of God*; that faith, belief, or opinion, which is only acquired any other way, is not saving.

But to go on further with what was likewise written at another time by the same apostle unto the church at *Corinth*, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the *keeping of the commandments of God.*"

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By what means then shall we poor mortals, who are continually surrounded with many weakneses and infirmities, keep the commandments of God in the perfections of them; being so far out of our reach and power, in the low state we find ourselves—by our nature and constitution? for here the apostle saith, in effect, that all our *opinions* and *religion* are vain and unavailable, unless we keep the commandments of God: which naturally moves this question; What are those commandments, so needful to be observed and kept? The Son of God himself informs us, where he saith, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another.” John, ch. xiii. ver. 34 and 35, and ch. xv. ver. 17. And we are further informed likewise by the apostle *John*, by the authority of Christ; “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning, the old commandment is the word, which we have heard from the beginning.” 1st John, ch. ii. ver. 7, and 2d John, ch. v. John, ch. xii. ver. 50.

What commandment was that (does any one ask) which they had from the beginning? It was the same which they had of God, from near the time when they began to be his people, by *faith* in his *promises*, under a covenant of works at Mount Sinai in the wilderness, where the ten commandments were given unto them on tables of stone, which were contrary unto them,

and which they could not keep in that degenerate state in which they then were, see Exod. ch. xix. ver. 3, 5, 6, and ch. xxxiv. ver. 27. and ch. xx. But God, who is altogether good just, knowing their weakness, and how little able they were rightly to perform all his moral commandments, though given for their improvement as rational creatures; was pleased to add another *commandment*, upon receiving and believing whereof, their ability to perform all the rest, and the doing of the whole will of the Almighty, did and doth depend; and without which they could not do it, but must remain in sin, under the breach of the promise and covenant they had made with and unto God.

For, sometime after they had received the ten commandments (and some other moral precepts), to which they promised obedience, God added another by the same mediator in this manner, "For this commandment which I
 " command thee this day, is not *bidden* from
 " thee, neither is it far off: it is not in heaven,
 " that thou shouldst say, who shall go up
 " for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that
 " we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond
 " the sea, that thou shouldst say, who
 " shall go over the sea for us, and bring it
 " unto us, that we may hear it and do it?
 " But the *word* is very nigh unto thee, in thy
 " *mouth*, and in thy *heart*, that thou mayst *do*
 " it." Deut. ch. xxx. ver. 11. &c.

This *commandment* then they had from the time they were in the wilderness, that Moses
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and seventy elders preached by this eternal, everliving, and unchangeable *word* and commandment, unto them there. Numb. ch. xi. ver. 25 to 29.

This is the *law*, which was a *light* unto the spiritually minded among them, and as a *lamp* which *burned* in them, and *seasoned*, and *sanctified* all their offerings and services, and made them acceptable unto God. This was the *light* to their *steps*, and *lantern* to their *paths*: their *departure* from this, so far as that there was no light in them, was the true cause of their *departure* from the *law* and *testimony* outwardly; from minding and keeping the ten moral commandments of God: whereby they provoked the Lord against them, and lost his protection and their strength, so as that, he gave them as a prey to their enemies, together with the land of promise, (for a time) which they had justly forfeited by their disobedience and rebellion.

And it is very observable, that the same which Moses calls the *commandment* then given or declared unto that people, the apostle calls *Christ*: for referring to the same scripture written by Moses, he saith, "But the righteousness, which is of faith, speaketh on this wise: say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead) but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy *mouth* and in thy *heart*: that is the word of faith, which we preach," see Deut. ch.

ch. xxx. ver. 14. Rom. ch. x. ver. 6, 7, and 8. This *word of faith* then is *Christ*, as he is the *word of God*, and is *God*, and the true *light*, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, see John, ch. i. ver. 9. and ch. xii. ver. 46. ch. iii. ver. 19.

And after the Son of God had thus established the old commandment, which had not only been from the beginning of the dispensation of God to Israel, but from the foundation of the world, and before all worlds, and by whom the worlds were made; he then adds *another commandment*, saying, “ A new
“ commandment I give unto you, that you
“ love one another, as I have loved you, that
“ ye also love one another. By this shall all
“ men know, that ye are my *disciples*, if ye have
“ *love one to another.*” John, ch. xiii. ver. 34, 35, and ch. xv. ver. 12. 17.

This is a *perpetual* and *irrevocable command* unto all Christians, to be taught them by himself and his ministers, from generation to generation, to the end of the world, though they may be of differing notions and opinions, and various ways of thinking in some matters of religion; and if so, then, though I may retain some *opinions* which thou canst not believe or receive, but thinkst them *erroneous*; yet, according to this *new commandment*, as well as the old, which saith, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, thou must *love me*, if not my *opinions*. How otherwise canst thou *love* or *please* God, whose commandments they are, or stand justified before him in the day of judgement?

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And, notwithstanding, thou mayst have *sentiments opposite* to mine, and, as I may think, altogether erroneous and contrary to religion, I must not hate, or dislike thee personally, but love thee under the same obligation and penalty; for the Son of God hath not made uniformity of *opinions* any *condition* to this *duty* of *social love*. And as we cannot be *both right*, under *opposite sentiments*, on any point (and peradventure both *parties* may be *wrong* in their ways of thinking), yet God loved us all whilst yet wrong in our *notions* and *practice*, and by his divine grace, taught, or would teach us, in the gentleness and meekness of his holy spirit: and so ought we, through the same grace, to help and inform one another in the things of God, as *brethren* in *love*, and not to *impose* or *obtrude* our *sentiments* one upon another as *lords* and *enemies*, in *anger*, in *railing*, and *perverse disputes*, and *imperious insults*, nor in *bate*, *contests*, *passions*, and *resentments*; all which are contrary to the *Christian faith*, *religion*, and *spirit*, and to those *commandments*, and gender to more ungodliness: but we may, and ought to persuade one another in *love*, in *truth*; for truth armeth with *patience* against *wrath* and *error*, and angry *contests*, and quarrels: truth hath an eye only to the convincement, conversion and salvation, of those we reason with, to the *doing* of the *commandments* of God, and good of *souls* of every *opinion*, and not for *victory*, or conquest, and *vain glory* therein.

If Christians would generally come to this, there would be less hurt, in our differences in opinions than now is, or heretofore hath been:

but there is a numerous sect, which, not regarding the *kingdom of Christ*, which is not of this world, but *themselves* and their own interests and party, have *stolen* into worldly *power* under a *profession* of Christ, and clothed themselves with *worldly honours, dignities and glory*, which are not of God, but contrary to the nature and end of the kingdom of Christ; and under pretence of being ministers of Christ, servants of the church of God, exalting *themselves* into high places in the earth, have *forgot* and despised the *Lord* and his *commandments*, and lorded over the *heritage* of God, and the rest of mankind; and *inventing* to themselves many *false opinions*, have *imposed* them, and their own precepts and commands, by force and *violence* upon other *people*, contrary to the precepts of God, and of *Jesus Christ* the Son of God; and have most uncharitably, barbarously, and inhumanly, pillaged, plundered, vilified, belied, falsely accused, and even as much as they could, *murdered and destroyed*, all those who *could* not, for *conscience* toward God, *worship* their images, and comply with their *false opinions* and *antichristian inventions*, whenever they have had opportunity and power.

These are the evil and destructive *fruits* and effects of that spirit of antichrist, who, professing Christ in *words*, denieth him in *works*, and being *departed* from Christ and this commandment, is become his enemy, and an enemy implacable to all that are born of God by him.

But

But this commandment is the living lamp from the holy *anointing*, which teacheth all things, and shining in the soul, illuminates the *understanding*, and fills the heart with divine *love*, and joy, which *honours* and *adores* God, and *flows* also towards man.

If mankind would adhere to this *diviné*, immortal *law*, the inward appearance of *Christ*, the word of God, they would then have *love* to God, and one toward another in him: but this is not to be *acquired* by any *ability* or contrivance of our *own* as creatures, but as we come to *trust* in God by this *faith*, which *works* by *love*.

Again, the third time, the apostle expresseth the same thing in the same epistle to the Galatians; "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision
" nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a
" new *creature*. And as many as walk accord-
" ing to this *rule*, peace be on them and mercy,
" and upon the *Israel* of God." Gal. ch. vi. ver. 15, 16.

Here is the result and perfection of all, the way to divine and everlasting peace and reconciliation with God, to be born again, and become a new creature; for unless a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. And unless we believe in the word of God, the eternal, everliving *commandment*, as *revealed* in the heart, we can never attain this *state* by all our own *faculties* and abilities, how strong and lucid soever they may be.

Didst thou give thyself thy being, O vain conceited mortal? Thou wilt justly answer, No. No more canst thou bring forth thyself in the likeness of God, in righteousness and true holiness. This is the work of God, through his eternal word, and the quickening power of it, and not of man: he who *quickeneth*, and he who is *quickened*, are not the same; it is God, who of his free will and abundant mercy in Christ, worketh in man; but it is man who *believeth* in him who *worketh*, and who, through grace, *obeyeth*, and becomes co-worker with God in his own salvation.

And, therefore, let every one of us inquire, and say in our own hearts, what do I *know* of this great work, or of this *mighty power* to have wrought, or is now working in me? A work made so *absolutely necessary* to my salvation by the doctrine of the Son of God!

Some people embrace certain *notions* and *principles* of what they call *religion*, by tradition from their parents or teachers, in their infancy, before they have understanding to distinguish truth from error, in matters of so great importance, and through a supine indolence go on therein, without any farther concern, or search, unto old age, and are no nearer this change than in their first production; but I would not have it to be so with any one in this large meeting this evening.

John the Baptist was sent to preach repentance to the *Jews*, who, though professors of the only religion established by Divine authority
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in that day, yet were sinners by the breach of their covenant with God. And Christ and his disciples, likewise preached the same, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," as most necessary, in the first place, for the state of that people. And it is as necessary now to preach repentance to mankind, professing the only true religion established by Christ: for notwithstanding our accidental professing of it, all men being first in a natural state, and arriving to maturity, are generally sinners, offending against the law of God written in them, in one thing or another, in the course of life; and have need of repentance in this age, as well as they had in that: and mankind ever will have need of repentance, from age to age, throughout all generations, for the same reason. And though it is above seventeen hundred years since the time that Christ and his apostles preached repentance to the Jews, and proclaimed the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, yet mankind by nature depraved, and sinners and impenitent, are now as far from the kingdom of God, and no nearer than they were, and ever will be so, until they believe in the *word of life*, and *repent* and forsake their sins.

But repentance is the gift of God, and his work, and it is not in the power and will of the sinner to repent when he pleases, Acts, ch. v. ver. 31. and ch. xi. ver. 18. and 2. Tim. ch. ii. ver. 25, and Rom. ch. ii. ver. 4.

We can never truly repent of the errors of our ways and sins, until we see and understand them

them to be so : for many *talk* of *sin*, and confess themselves sinners in a *traditional* way, who do not repent. But O sinful man, whosoever thou art, hast thou ever so seen sin in thy own heart, and has thy understanding been so convinced of thy errors as sincerely to repent and become sensible of the *life* of the *Son* of *God* in thy own soul, so as to rule and reign there ; that where sin hath abounded, grace and truth may much more abound, to the glory of God, and completion of their own salvation ?

For when man *seeth* his sins, so as they become *exceeding sinful* in his sight, and his soul heavy laden therewith, and through grace repenteth and forsaketh them, then by the goodness and mercy of God, declared in the blood of Christ, he hath a free and full pardon of them sealed unto him, *testified* by the holy *spirit* of Christ, by whom he is convinced that he is a sinner. And then by the same spirit, man likewise seeth there is an absolute necessity of being sanctified ; for though the *acts* of sin may be pardoned, which may have been *done* against the commandment of God, yet the evil *effects*, the *stain* and *pollution* of sin may, and will, remain in the heart, till done away and destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ, divinely and inwardly *revealed* and manifested : for the same *spirit* that *convinceth* man of sin, *redeemeth* him from sin, and all the *defilements* of it. And being thus sanctified by the Son, we *love*, *honour*, and *obey* the *Father* and the *Son*, and love and *hold fast* the great and *living commandment*, and truly delight in the *doing* of it. For because we then *love* God in his own *love*, we *obey* him,
for

for a man will not obey one he doth not love but from *compulsion*; and then he hath no reward, which is not the way of God with mankind; for the whole *salvation* of God to mankind worketh only by *love*. The Father *sent*, and still sendeth the *Son*, in *love*: the Son suffered, and suffereth, in *love*: the *spirit* worketh and completeth the immortal *law* of *love* and *life* in mankind, in the power of the *Father*, who is *love*.

I would have all to look unto *God* for *religion* *this way*, for this is religion indeed, without which all *notions* and *speculations* about it, how necessary soever suited to the letter of the *scriptures* themselves, by the *wisdom* and *subtily* of *man*, are vain and null, and avail nothing to the redemption or salvation of the soul.

Let all, therefore, look to this new and living commandment, and then, though at first appearance it *condemns* thy *sins* in thee, yet, as thou *believest*, *lovest* and *obeyest* it, and art sanctified thereby, thou will *feel* the *love* of God shed abroad in thy heart, to the destruction of all slavish fear; and then thou wilt love the *Lord* the true God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and mind, which is the first and great commandment, and thy neighbour as thyself, which is the second, and consequently do thy whole duty to God and man: for on these two depend the whole Christian faith and religion:—But oh! how will too many who are *neighbours*, professing the holy *Christian faith* and *religion*, hate, belie, revile, falsely accuse, vilify, abuse, wrong, defraud, back-bite, traduce, and surmise

mise evil one against another, and offend; and others become tale-bearers and messengers of evil among neighbours, to the lessening and *destruction* of all *love* and *peace*, and consequently of all virtue and *religion* among them: and again, how ready are many to receive those evil *messengers* of *sin* and *Satan*, and their false reports, and to conceive, and take offences thereby one against another; and by the whisperings of Satan, only in their own imaginations, when no offence is at all given, intended, or thought of by the person accused.

And then how spitefully, and with mortal anger, rage, hatred, malice, and revenge, will the offended resent the injuries, or imagined injuries done them, so as never to be reconciled to the parties offending, or being innocent, supposed only to have offended.

The habitations of all such are far from God; they are in the gall of bitterness, and, in that state, the *disciples* and *friends* of the *evil one*, and not of the truth, and their profession (as to themselves) is a continual lie.

And yet, such is the goodness and mercy of the Father in the Son; that when through the reproofs and rebukes of his Holy Spirit in their intervals and calm times (for such they are favoured with), they see themselves, feel the load of their sins, want redemption, *believe* in the *Son of God*, cry earnestly for salvation; to be relieved from under the heavy yoke of Satan and their own lusts, then the Lord hear-
eth

eth from heaven, his dwelling-place, and hath compassion upon them.

And then, through the operation of the spirit of the Son of God, they come to be born again, of the nature of him who never fell, but laid down his life for mankind, whilst yet enemies in the image, and nature of the first Adam, who fell from his first state, and then all those evils are done away and destroyed: and then the old man, with all those evils, is put off, and the new, with all his righteousness, holiness, and truth, is put on, to our everlasting reconciliation with God our Father, and one with another in him, and to our complete restoration and establishment for ever, above all temptation or fear of any future fall.

It is written in the holy scripture, you know, as the doctrine of Christ, that unless a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; nevertheless, though by this doctrine it is declared impossible for mankind to be saved in the fallen state of the first Adam, yet all things being possible with God, he hath revealed a way whereby all mankind may be saved.

When a man is convinced in his heart of any particular sin, by which he hath been often overcome, and which hath been unto him as a right hand, or eye, and which he hath, at length, seen, through the *divine light* in his understanding, to be evil, and in his own strength, strove against it, but in vain, and concludes it impossible for him ever to resist it; yet,

yet, as he believeth in that *light*, and *turneth* his *mind inward toward it*, there is sufficient power and virtue therein, to overcome the evil, how powerful soever ; as is said of God, who is that light, " That he worketh in you, both to will, " and to do of his good pleasure." And yet we must be co-workers with him of our own salvation, and that, " with fear and trembling." Phil. ch. ii. ver. 12, 13. And then we do not only *believe*, but *see*, and *feel*, by happy *experience*, what God the Lord is able and willing to do, and hath done and finished in us, and for us, our complete redemption and establishment for ever. And as it is also written, concerning them who are gone before unto glory ; " Not by works of righteousness which we " have done, but according to his mercy he " saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and " renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. ch. iii. ver. 5. And again, " By grace ye are saved, " through faith, and that not of yourselves, " it is the gift of God." Ephes. ch. ii. ver. 8.

And thus hath he likewise, through the same mercy, opened unto us the way of regeneration, by which we too may be fitted for a full entrance into the same glory, and inheritance, which fadeth not, at the conclusion of our days, if through the same grace, and faithfulness thereunto, we hold out to the end.

This is a great privilege and advancement indeed, for the children of the first *Adam* to be born of the second *Adam*, and for ever established in him immortal. The first *Adam* you have heard, was made a living soul, but the
second,

second Adam is not made, but begotten of the Father and his quickening spirit. The first *Adam* was of the earth, and was earthly, but the second Adam is the Lord from heaven. To the first *Adam* under the offence, the Creator said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;" but abundance of grace being revealed through *Jesus Christ*, the second Adam, it is also written, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. John, ch. v. ver. 25.

In hearing, therefore, the divine voice of the all-quickening spirit of the Son of God, and *believing therein*, we come to live unto God, and no more unto ourselves, as it is also written, *The just shall live by faith*. And being born of God, in our inner man, that *law*, and commandment, which was so contrary to the propensity of our nature, and seemed impossible to be performed by us, whilst the nature of the first *Adam* bare rule in us, becomes a *law of nature* unto us, when born of the *life* and *nature* of the second Adam, and his Holy Spirit becomes life-eternal in us; and being thus reconciled unto the Father, through the Mediator (and proper medium) ordained of God to that end; then, and not till then, we *love God*, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, our Saviour, above ourselves, and above all mankind, and things, our neighbours, and all men, as we ought, according to the commandment of God.

Thus

Thus I speak concerning what mankind may and should be, according to the doctrine of Christ and the Gospel, and hope there are divers in my audience, who, through grace, do experience the truth of these things. We have all, I doubt not, learned of Christ, by his grace, in some measure; but they who have learned most of all, may still learn more and more, of him, whose wisdom is inexhaustible and power boundless, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who would have all men to *believe* in him, and learn of him, who is the new and living commandment, and be saved.

Oh! that every soul of us here present may come to know the living effects of the saving power of Christ in ourselves; that my soul might see that day before I depart out of this tabernacle (and I do see as afar off), that this *love* may *abound* in and among *all parties* and *opinions*. For having, through infinite mercy, tasted of the goodness of God, I can the readier believe, that he worketh, and will yet work the same things, and much more abundantly, in many more, and will yet exalt the dignity and power of his own holy name, and glorify his own arm in every nation, tongue, and people throughout the world: for the Son of God hath said of himself, "All power in heaven
" and on earth is given unto me." Seeing then the Son of God hath all power, the evil one hath *no power*, but what the children of men may give him over themselves, by yielding to his temptations; as saith the apostle, "His servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves ser-
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“ wants to obey, whether of sin unto death, or
 “ obedience unto righteousness.”

The Son of God having *all power*, is the complete Saviour indeed ; he is able to save to the very uttermost, all who come unto God by him ; and therefore the adversary is nothing before him, cannot stand at his approach ; even as *darkness* cannot stand before the *light*, or night when the sun approacheth, and ariseth in his strength and glory.

If therefore you *believe* in the *Son of God*, in his divine and inward appearance, he is both *willing* and *able* to relieve your souls from under the heavy yoke of the *evil* one, and of *sin*, according to his own gracious invitation and counfel, “ Come unto me all ye who labour, “ and are heavy laden, and I will give you “ rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of “ me, for I am meek and low in heart, and “ ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my “ yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matt. ch. xi. ver. 28, 29, 30.

Thus *believing* and *obeying* the Son of God, we may all be brought forth in his *image* and *nature*, in righteousness and true holiness, that the great adversary (great I say, through the too ready and willing submission and obedience poor deluded mankind yield unto him who cannot compel them), may be disappointed, defeated and dethroned, and Christ, whose right it is, may be exalted and reign.

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Then we shall all have but *one Lord*, and *one faith*, and be all under *one baptism*, and all drink into *one spirit*, as of old; for the true cause why mankind, professing the *one true God*, and the *one Lord Jesus Christ*, cannot love one another as they ought, is, because they are *not baptized* by the *one spirit* into *one body*, and they are not baptized by one spirit, because they do not *believe* in him.

The *baptism* of Christ is the *act* of the holy *spirit of Christ*, in the heart and mind, whereby we are sanctified, justified, redeemed, and saved from all sin, and impurity of flesh and spirit, and the shedding abroad and influence of *divine love*, sensibly and plentifully in us; for, according to the doctrine of the gospel, Christ himself is the great baptizer of souls, by his holy spirit, though he sometimes makes such as he inspires to that end instrumental therein, as co-workers with him in that great work.

This is he, who according to John the Baptist, baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. This is he, the Son and Lord, who remaineth in the house, the church of God, for ever, when the dispensation of the servant is ended.

And therefore, let the profession of us mortals be what it will, and our *notions* as the most lively *images* drawn from the doctrines in the holy scriptures, or the *subtile reasons* and imaginations of men upon them, until we *believe* in *Christ* as *inwardly revealed*, and be *baptized* of *him* there, and *washed* by him in the inside,

inside, and *drink* into his holy spirit, we are no members of his church, which is his body, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, or of one spirit with him, nor otherwise any part or lot in him or with him.

Let us all therefore wait for this great and glorious baptizer of souls with divine and *holy fire*. But what is this fire say the unexperienced professors? I have heard of some even of old, professing the Christian faith and religion, and yet so very ignorant of it, and so far from the truth, as to stigmatize their proselytes with hot irons, calling that the baptism of the Holy Ghost with fire; but the holy scripture declares what that fire is, "Is not my word as
 " a fire, saith the Lord, and as a hammer
 " which breaketh the rock in pieces." Jer. ch. xxiii. ver. 29. This word is, in scripture language, compared unto various things, according to his different manifestations and operations; if thy heart be so hardened, and thy soul be so laden through sin and unbelief, that thou canst not so much as breathe unto God in prayer, or look toward him with desire, yet this *hammer* is able to *break* it in *pieces*, and this divine, powerful, and holy *fire*, the *spirit* of this great *baptizer*, destroys and does away all manner of obstructions and impurities out of the hearts and minds of mankind, when manifested in them, as it is said of him,
 " The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come
 " to his temple, even the messenger of the
 " covenant, whom ye delight in; behold he
 " shall come, saith the Lord of hosts: but who
 " may abide the day of his coming? And who
 " shall

“ shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like
 “ a *refiner's fire*, and like fuller's soap, and he
 “ shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.”
 Mal. ch. iii. ver. 1, 2, 3. And again, John
 answered, saying unto them all, “ I indeed
 “ baptize you with water, but one mightier
 “ than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes
 “ I am not worthy to unloose: he shall *baptize*
 “ you with the *Holy Ghost*, and with *fire*, whose
 “ fan is in his hand, and he shall *thoroughly*
 “ *purge* his floor, and will gather the wheat in-
 “ to his garner, but the chaff he will burn with
 “ fire unquenchable.” Luke, ch. iii. ver.
 16, 17.

Here is a plain description of this glorious baptizer, he is the Lord, the desire of all nations, sought of all the diseased for healing virtue, and of all the unclean for purification. His *baptism* is with the pure holy *flame* of his *living word*. This is he who cleanseth his floor fully, gathereth his wheat into his garner, and destroyeth the chaff with *unquenchable fire*, though connate with the wheat, and brought up with it. Here is that divine *virtue* and *power* which initiates the soul of man into the church of the *first born*, written in heaven. This is that *wisdom* and eternal divine *power*, which all the holy angels in heaven worship and adore, and which perfects the spirits of the just, and fits them for heavenly places.

I wish with all my soul, according to the measure of that *love*, which I have *felt* moving and flowing in my heart in this meeting, that every one here might come unto *this baptism*,

tism, that we might all be *members* of this *one body*, of which Christ the Lord is the only head. *The church which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all*: this *love* constrains those who are favoured with the divine *touches*, and *influence* of it in their hearts, to wish, that all *mankind* might *thus believe* in the Son of God, and be *baptized* with this *baptism*, according to the *command of Christ*, and *mission* of his apostles to all nations; when he said unto them, “ Go
 “ teach all nations, baptizing *them* into the
 “ *name of the Father*, and of the Son, and of
 “ the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all
 “ things whatsoever I have commanded you,
 “ and lo, I am with you always unto the end
 “ of the world: go ye into all the world, and
 “ preach the gospel to every creature. He
 “ that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;
 “ but he that believeth not shall be damned;
 “ and behold I send the promise of my Father
 “ upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jeru-
 “ salem, until ye be endued with power from
 “ on high; for John truly baptized with water,
 “ but ye shall be baptized with the Holy
 “ Ghost, not many days hence; but ye shall
 “ receive power after that the Holy Ghost is
 “ come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses
 “ unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea,
 “ and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part
 “ of the earth.” See Matt. ch. xxviii. ver. 19,
 20. Mark, ch. xvi. ver. 15, 16. Luke xxiv.
 ver. 49. Acts, ch. i. ver. 4, 5, 8.

The *temporary baptism* of John, and the *per-
 manent baptism* of the Son of God, are here so clear-
 ly *contradistinguished*, the former with water, and

the latter with the Holy Spirit, that he that hath an eye to see, may see, that *water baptism* is so far from being *here commanded*, that it is here for ever *superseded* and *ended*, as to any manner of *obligation thereto* in the church of Christ, this *baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*, being that only which Christ sent his disciples or *apostles* to *declare* unto the world, in his own *Spirit* and *power*, as *necessary* to their salvation, and which they are to believe and receive on pain of *damnation*, or of all them to whom *Christ* is *preached*, by the *wisdom* and *power* of the *Holy Ghost*.

First of all, Christ was to be preached unto by the *Jews*, as to his coming in the flesh unto them, and his apostles were first to be his *witnesses* as to that; that the *fulfilling* of all the *promises* of God to that people might be made *manifest* and *proved*.—And that being fully done, they then were directed, and enabled, to bear testimony unto him, and *preach* him to all *nations*, as the *light* of the *world*, he being always with them, and in them, *baptizing* his Holy Spirit; but not every one who *heard* their *doctrine*, but every one who *heard* the *word*, that is himself, as he said to the Jews, “Why do you not understand my speech, even “because you cannot hear my word.” John, ch. viii. ver. 43.

Such as were sensible of the *hidden influence* of his invisible *power*, and from that foundation *believed*; upon such he poured forth his *Holy Spirit*, as the immediate *evidence* and *consequence* of their *faith*, and sanctification and justification of their souls; and to the completion of
their

their salvation in a progressive manner. John, ch. vii. ver. 38.

For the *baptism* of the *Holy Ghost* is the coming of the *Holy Spirit* of Christ upon such as hear the *gospel* preached in its true *authority*, and *believe*, and is as one act in preaching Christ, in the *demonstration* of his own *wisdom* and *power*, and this manifestation and *baptism*, is that which is meant and intended by the *washing* of *regeneration* and *renewing* of the *Holy Ghost*: and why the *renewing* of the *Holy Ghost*? Because all nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were departed, in a great degree, if not totally, from the knowledge of the *truth*, and *spirit* of God, unto the knowledge of whom, they were to be restored and renewed; and this is the dispensation of the *gospel* still, and will ever continue to be so to mankind, though for a time (until the mystery of the iniquity in the *kingdom* of *antichrist* be fully made manifest) it hath been obscured and clouded, by antichristian subtilty, and darkness.

He that is *baptized* of Christ, hath the evidence of it in himself, his heart is often melted by the holy influence of *divine love*, and his eyes overflow with floods of many tears, arising from that *consolating cause*, and often when alone, under the *sensible operation* of *divine wisdom* and *power*, which all the water on the globe can never produce or effect, by *whom*, or in what *manner*, or *name*, or *names*, in *words*, or to whatsoever *subject* administered or applied.

For this baptism is effected by the holy influence of the flame of *living divine love*, the soul that is the subject of this *baptism*, being thereby sanctified, becomes a *true member* of the *church* and *body* of *Christ*, of which himself is *head*, not of a *dead body*, but of that which is *alive*; for every member of the *body* of *Christ* is living. As saith the apostle, "The life which I now live, is by faith in the Son of God." This baptism, consequential to this faith, is effected by the same power that raised the body of *Christ* himself from the dead, the eternal, quickening spirit, and power of the Father. Gal. ch. ii. ver. 20.

And I would have all to take especial notice of this, that seeing the Son of God is *always with* and in his *church* and *people*, thus *baptized* by him, whether immediately or instrumentally, he neither *needeth*, nor *appointeth* any *representative*, *vicegerent*, *vicar*, or other *head upon the earth* to exercise any *authority* or *rule* over them. So that it is an antichristian usurpation in any man, or *order* of men, and contrary to the command of *Christ*, to set up him and themselves *over the church of Christ*, under any *pretence* whatsoever. Nor are any set of men whomsoever *successors* of the *apostles* of *Christ*, as ministers in his church, but those only who *succeed* in some degree of the same divine power; as *called*, *fitted*, and *ordained*, by *Christ himself* unto that service, such are *servants* indeed, in the *house of God*, and not *masters*.

Nor is it at all in the nature of a *christian ministry*,

ministry, nor can it ever answer the great end of it, to pass by *succession* and *tradition* only, by any human *power*, *rites*, *abilities*, or *qualifications* whatever. Nor doth even the *christian religion* itself, so succeed, but both it, and its ministry doth, and will proceed as the *immediate* work of Christ, the true God, from age to age, throughout all generations.

For as from the beginning, that was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual; or, in other words, all mankind in our first production into this world, are in a state of nature, in the first *Adam* only, and as many, as from the beginning of the world, have *believed*, do believe, or shall believe in the *spirit of Christ*, under whatever *notion*, *name*, or *character*, and have obeyed him, so far as he hath been, is, or shall be manifested in them, or their duty made known by his divine *light*, and performed; they have been, are, and shall be thereby, in some degree renewed, changed, and saved by the Son of God, in the infinite mercy and goodness of the *Father*.

For as the whole created human nature suffered a lapse, or degeneracy, in the root, and all mankind succeeding from thence, partaking of that defect; though the greatest part of them never heard of *Adam*, or knew any thing of his *fall*, even so, many have had, have, and shall have salvation by Christ, the Son of God, the second *Adam*, as divinely made manifest in them, who never have heard, or shall hear any thing of his coming in the flesh, as born of the
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the virgin, or under the name or character of Jesus Christ.

For the promises of God to all nations (the Jews excepted) were, and are without their knowledge, and yet shall stand and be accomplished, though few, in comparison, have ever heard, or shall hear of it in form, which is after this manner; “ They shall not hurt nor
 “ destroy in all my holy mountain; for the
 “ earth shall be *full* of the *knowledge* of the
 “ Lord, as the waters cover the sea; and in that
 “ day there shall be a root of *Jesse*, which shall
 “ stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall
 “ the *Gentiles seek*, and his rest shall be glorious.
 “ Isa. ch. xi. ver. 9, 10.

Again, “ Behold my servant whom I uphold,
 “ mine *elect* in whom my soul delighteth, I have
 “ put my *spirit* upon him, he shall bring forth
 “ judgment to the *Gentiles*.” Isa. ch. xlii. ver.
 1 and 6. “ I the Lord have called thee in
 “ righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and
 “ will keep thee, and give thee for a *covenant*
 “ of the *people*, for the *light* of the *Gentiles*.”
 Again, “ And he said, it is a light thing that
 “ thou shouldst be my *servant*, to raise up the
 “ *tribes* of *Jacob*, and to *restore* the preserved
 “ of *Israel*; I will also give thee for a *light* to
 “ the *Gentiles*, that thou mayst be my *salvation*
 “ to the *end* of the *earth*.” See Isa. ch. xlix.
 ver. 6. and 22. ch. lx. ver. 3. 5. 11. and Jer.
 ch. xvi. ver. 19. and Mal. ch. i. ver. 11.

Now it would be an unworthy detraction
 from the extensive unlimited goodness and mercy
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of the great God, in any one to think, that none should have the benefit of these promises of the Almighty, but only such as have heard, or shall *formerly* hear of them in *vocal* language in any form; for though they lay hid from everlasting in the mind of the most High, until revealed unto the prophets, and then remained recluse in the scripture, for ages, among the Jews, until the coming of the Son of God, yet the Gentiles had the advantage of them, in some sort or measure, from the beginning, according to the hint given by the apostle Paul, where he saith, "The
 "mystery which hath been hid for ages, and
 "from generations, but now is made *ma-*
 "nifest to his saints, to whom God would
 "make known what is the riches of the glory
 "of this *mystery* among the *Gentiles*, which is
 "*Christ in you*, the hope of glory." Col. ch. i. ver. 26, 27.

And as the human nature is but *one thing*, consisting of many particulars, multiplied from *one root*, the *whole* shall be saved at *last*, by virtue of the substantial union with the divine nature (which likewise is but one), through Christ, the Mediator between God and man; and *none* shall be *lost*, but the son of *perdition*; and such as *finally apostatize from God*, and become *one* with the *evil* one. John, ch. xvii. ver. 2. 12. and see that chapter throughout.

Now, notwithstanding what I have said above, concerning the weakness, invalidity, or nullity of *tradition* in the *christian religion*, or ministry, I own, and am certain, that so much of the holy
 scripture

scripture as is extant, being originally the dictates of the holy spirit of Christ, they have been, are, and ever will, throughout all ages, be of great, and the greatest *traditional* and instrumental use, help and service, next to the *spirit* himself, as brought to remembrance by him, and *opened* and used under his *own conduct* and direction, in the hands, hearts, and understandings of his *true ministers*, of his own chusing, raising, inspiring, qualifying and ordaining, who have hitherto, in every generation, been hated, contradicted, opposed, vilified, belied, persecuted, murdered, and many ways destroyed, by the *traditional ministers* of *anticbrist*, and of men and nations *deceived* by him, and them, through the subtle working of that wisdom, which is from beneath, which is sensual, earthly, and devilish. James, ch. iii. ver. 15.

As saith the apostle, " They who are the
 " children of the flesh, these are not the chil-
 " dren of God, but the children of the promise
 " are counted for the seed." Rom. ch. ix.
 ver. 8. " Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are
 " the children of promise." Gal. ch. iv. ver. 28.
 Again, " Then Jesus said unto them, yet a little
 " while is the *light* with you : walk while ye have
 " the light, lest darkness come upon you : for
 " he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not
 " whither he goeth ; while ye have light, *believe*
 " in the *light*, that ye *may* be the children of
 " light." John, ch. xii. ver. 35, 36. Again,
 " Ye are all the children of light, and the chil-
 " dren of the *day*." 1st Thes. ch. v. ver. 5.
 " But as then, he that was born after the flesh,
 " persecuted him that was born after the spirit,
 " even so it is *now*." Gal. ch. iv. ver. 29.

But

But though, hitherto, it hath been so, and still is, it shall not *remain* so for ever; for the end of the power of *anticrist*, and his *ministry*, *approacheth quickly*, when his subtilty shall be made *manifest* and *destroyed*, by the *brightness* of the revelation and manifestation of the *Son of God*, whose *wisdom*, *kingdom* and *glory* shall supersede all kingdoms on earth, and by the transcending thereof, obscure all glories, and the name of glories; as the brightness of the *sun* in the day-time obscureth every *star* as though they were not, and yet destroyeth none, nor hindereth any from shining, or moving in its own orbit or sphere.

Now that you and I, and all that *believe*, and shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and call upon the name of the Father by him, and even those also yet afar off, of every *sect* under heaven, may all be carried forward from *faith* to *faith*, and baptized by the holy spirit of *Christ*, and thereby made living *members* of his holy *body*, the church; that we may eat, drink and sup with him, as children of one Father, at his holy table, in his heavenly kingdom here, so far as our present mode of being will allow, and to all eternity hereafter, in the fullness of his unspeakable glory, where we shall sing dominion and praises to God, and the Lamb our Saviour, for ever and ever, is my sincere prayer unto him, and end of my labour and travel, through his holy spirit. *Amen.*

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

Gracechurch-Street Meeting,

B Y

J O H N G U R N E Y,

ANNO 1733.

“**G**ODLINESS is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” I took an opportunity this morning to represent unto you the consequences thereof, so far as time and opportunity would admit. I had no thought of speaking on the same subject again until after I came here to my seat; but finding the same now to dwell on my mind, I shall crave the audience of this assembly, while I prosecute the subject a little farther: I think I then delivered myself so clear and intelligibly to you, that there will be no occasion to repeat much thereof at this time. Well, godliness is profitable, and before I proceed I shall just mention what I mean by the term godliness; and first I observe, it is not an assent or consent to the opinion of all, or either of

of the sects or denominations in the Christian world. That is not it. Well then, what is it? some may say: I will tell you—it is comprised in this single word, *holiness*. “Be ye holy,” (says the prophet) and personating God,” for I think he speaks in the singular number, and says, “for I the Lord your God am holy;” so that there is a necessity of being holy, if we would come to experience what godliness is. I remember the prophet Isaiah, when he had been speaking to the Jews concerning those things which they ought to believe; he comes to this point, and says, “there is an highway which the Lord God has cast up for his redeemed and ransomed to walk in:” The name thereof is Holiness, in which the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err, and every one that walks therein, has this character stamped upon him. Now that man, wherever he lives, or among what people, or sect of religion soever he converseth, that is just and honest, and walketh uprightly before God, that man is properly a holy man. Now from what has been said, you may easily draw this consequence, that godliness and holiness are synonymous terms. I grant it, they are so; a man cannot be godly without being holy, neither holy without being godly. Having made these observations, I shall now pursue: godliness is profitable to all things. It is that which is of the greatest benefit to mankind; to demonstrate which, I would first observe, that is the most beneficial to mankind, which most conduceth to their happiness both here and in the world to come. This is a proposition I am persuaded no rational man or woman will deny. Next I would observe what happiness is,
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and wherein it doth consist, which is in these four things; it is a good state of health; secondly, a good reputation; thirdly, a sufficient competency wherewith to live in the world comfortably; fourthly, which is beyond all the rest, peace and tranquility of mind. These four things complete man's happiness here; and to all these good ends godliness is conducive, from which I infer, godliness is of the greatest benefit to mankind; and now I shall explain how it conduceth to these desirable ends, and ungodliness to directly the contrary. First, it is a great happiness to enjoy health, but there has been many born with a good and strong constitution, who by ungodliness and intemperance have destroyed it, and have been reduced to the most miserable and pitiful condition, I have known many in the course of my acquaintance, or in the course of my observation, that have been instances hereof: whereas the godly man, altho' he may be of weak constitution, subject to ailures and illness, yet by temperance and prudent carefulness he has enjoyed himself comfortably through this world. Well, it is a happiness or satisfaction to have a good reputation; but the ungodly man by his corrupt, lewd, vicious and profligate living, is deprived of this advantage, and becomes the shame, and, as it were, the offscouring of the people; they are had in contempt and despised; whereas the godly man he is had in good repute, is well spoken of, and becomes honourable amongst his acquaintance, and some have been raised up and concerned to be teachers among the people in a more universal manner. The ungodly man, altho' he may have had a great deal of the wealth of this world, yet by intemperance and

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profuseness

profuseness in vicious practices, has been reduced to want, to mere beggary and indigency.

This has often been seen; but godly men, by honest and just dealings, have sometimes acquired a great deal of the wealth of this world; they have become great men in their time, have had a sufficient competency, and enjoyed it with comfort; but some may say wicked men may and do acquire riches likewise as much as the godly. I allow it, they may so; but altho' they may have got never so much riches, and live in never so much splendor, yet at times when they come to reflect on their past vicious conduct and fraudulent practices, then their conscience smites them, and those have trouble and anguish of mind, so that they do not nor can not enjoy their riches so as to be happy therein. The poor, just, upright, godly man, though he may live in a cottage, or may live in obscurity, yet he has that which is beyond all the other enjoyments, peace and tranquility of mind, that peace which passeth the understanding, and is infinitely joyous to the soul; it is so, the world can neither give, nor deprive of this great happiness: but the ungodly man, altho' he lives in all the pomp and glory of this world, yet he wants virtue, and this peace; and when he comes to serious thought will be filled with sorrow and remorse; then the worm gnaweth, and the sting of his conscience wounds him, and altho' oftentimes by hardness of heart, and indulging his lustful desires, he may shut it out and soar above it; though, as many do, he may run to the tavern, and drink till overcome with wine, so as it were to wash away sorrow; yet the greatest man in the world can never totally suppress it; it will rise up again. The time may come, when
perhaps

perhaps he may be on the brink of eternity; then God will meet with him, and will, as I may say, revive his witness in his conscience, which will bring him into bitterness and misery, too grievous to be borne, as the wise man saith, "The infirmities of the body man may sustain, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" This is the effect of ungodliness and unholiness, so that in all things wherein happiness doth consist, it plainly appeareth that godliness and holiness are of the greatest benefit to mankind, as it is conducive thereunto: and on the contrary hand, *vice versa*, ungodliness and unholiness, that which is directly the contrary; wherefore now I intreat and exhort you to walk circumspect, so that you may come up in a holy, godly life and conversation, especially the young and rising generation. Take the advice of the wise man, and remember your Creator now in the days of your youth before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when they shall say they have no pleasure in them.—When I sat in this meeting I looked upon you with a tender eye and compassion, and my heart was filled with love towards the youth, the young men and young women, that are many of you the offspring of godly parents, and I thought what a great pity it would be that any of you should miss the great benefit and advantage that there is in godliness; then let me beseech you look into yourselves, and see that ye are coming up in this life of godliness. A bare profession or name of religion will not do, neither a good education, nor the example of pious parents; these barely will not do; but you must come to the experimental knowledge of practical godliness in and for yourselves. That is what I wish for

you, so that you may live in the fear and favour of God, and grow and increase in piety and good works, and then may ye come to be teachers, and good examples to others, and as it were the lights of the world. A city set upon a hill cannot be hid, “ Wherefore let your lights so shine before men, that they may see your good works, *“ and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*— If this be your concern, so that you may experience this life of godliness and holiness, then shall you enjoy the greatest felicity that can be attained in this life, being the assurance of God’s love and mercy to your souls, and the influence of his divine spirit to direct, and also to encourage and preserve you, so as ye may *bold out to the end*; that when these tabernacles of clay shall be dissolved, ye may inherit mansions in the *eternal kingdom of divine rest and glory*.—And now having expressed these things which I had upon my mind, with a great deal more, I leave them to your serious consideration, desiring they may rest upon your minds with due weight. I recommend you to God, as the apostle Paul did one of the primitive churches when he was about to depart; and they bore him company on his way, he takes his leave of them, and says, “ To God I leave you, and to the word of his grace that is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among the sanctified.” To this I leave you, desiring that you may every one of you be experiencers thereof.

Taken down by THOMAS CROWLEY *on*
the same day.

The

*The Nature and Necessity of Knowing
One's Self.*

A

D I S C O U R S E

DELIVERED AT

The MEETING-HOUSE, in Grace-
church-Street, London,

JUNE 12, 1737.

I HAVE in remembrance a very short precept of a man of understanding, though not under the character of a *Jew* or *Christian*, which, I think, may be well worthy of the notice of every one here; and it is this: "Know thyself." There is not a more useful knowledge than this, except the knowledge of God: and if we do not know ourselves, how shall we know the Lord? I have observed, as I sat in silence, waiting upon God in this meeting, that all matter is created of God, as well that which is inert and lifeless, as the living creatures; and all matter that we are acquainted with revolves from form to form, but there is no annihilation of any.

The plants of the earth observe a succession from age to age: from small seeds they spring up, and proceed from stature to stature, after their kinds, till they arrive at the perfections assigned them: and then also they gradually decline, and others take place from their seeds, and as their offspring.

The living creatures also observe the laws prescribed them; after their manner producing their own species, which renew, increase, decrease, and succeed, from generation to generation, as the others do; so that there is no certain continuance of any particular.

The next thing that I have in view is, the very low state in which we mortals are first produced into this world; in that state, we have no knowledge, no understanding, but are like the beasts of the field, and other animals, or even more helpless than they, and incapable of any law but that of nature, which we cannot break.

And being endued with five senses, we grow up by imperceptible gradations, in the use of them, and proceed from stature to stature, and strength to strength, both of body and mind, to the degrees of which we are severally capable, as variously circumstanced, for we are not alike in either.

The mind, dwelling in the body, could never perceive or apprehend the things that are without, or have any knowledge of them, but by the senses, through the organs of the body, adapted to that end. The mind within, by
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these begins to take notice of things without; and every creature and thing that we see and observe, exhibits its own idea to the sense; and as we grow up, more objects are frequently presented, and the mind, which hears, sees, tastes, smells, and handles, by the organs of the body, gradually becomes more and more furnished with ideas, which, in time, it is enabled to collate, and compare; and as the understanding is by this means enlarged, it now begins to attend to causes and their effects, and to form some conjectures of the why and why not of things, whence they are, why they are thus, and not otherwise: and as they differ in their forms, so likewise in their natures, virtues and ends; it is the mind and understanding, being informed of the outward creation by the senses, that deduces this consequence from those premises: that they, and we ourselves also, must have an Author of our being, all-wise, almighty, eternal, and all-good, holy, righteous, just, and true, worthy above all to be sought after, known, loved, feared, honoured, and obeyed. Yet, as our first state in this world is only animal, before we arrive at a competent degree of consideration, and understanding, or knowledge of ourselves, or value of our immortal souls; we are, by the perpetual presence of objects, adapted to our senses, and a natural propensity to pursue the sight of the eye, the hearing of the ear, and the delights which the other senses, seated in the natural mind and corporeal frame can afford, and which are the chief good and of the highest esteem in our view, as not having yet tasted of any thing of a superior nature or kind;

we are by these (I say) so strongly habituated, and biassed to the pursuit of these objects, (though most unworthy of our pains) that we are apt to proceed in this manner, without a due search into ourselves, what we are, and why we were created, and produced here in this world, and by whom, and what the proper end of our being, as if to no other purpose but to gratify our senses, and live in sensual pleasures and delights, as others the lower animals do, and like the brutes of the field, which feed on the fruits by the roots of the trees, and rest under their shades, and never look up to see whence the food and shelter come, or consider their own being and end.

Thus the generality of mankind live, for a time, in this present world. Whilst in this manner of being, they live and die, and are never acquainted with themselves: but he that perfectly knows himself, perceives that man is an abridgment of the whole creation of God, and has made a great step towards knowing it: but if we are not able rightly to know ourselves, how should we come to the knowledge of the Most High, our Creator? And if we could know all the creation, and anatomize every part of the matter of it, and distinctly account for the manner of its cohesion and existence, and knew all that is possible to be known of it, and had all the knowledge of the angels of God in heaven; though the knowledge and contemplation of things in the mind and understanding affords an intellectual pleasure, superior to that of the senses; yet all this would not render us completely happy, even in this present world;

world: we may live and die unhappy notwithstanding; neither would the gratifying of all our senses and appetites, if without account and with impunity, alter the cause at all.

We pursue, with diligence, those objects which promise us delight, in the views we have of them at a distance; but when obtained, though with difficulty and hazard, and enjoyed, they do not answer the expectations we have formed in our imaginations concerning them, but perish with the using, and we are disappointed. It is therefore most proper that, as reasonable creatures, we pursue that satisfaction, and those things, which are real, permanent, and everlasting.

What is that, therefore, which makes mankind everlastingly happy, and gives him full satisfaction? It is the knowledge of the Creator of all things; of the true and living God, and not of the things that are made only. And it is the Lord himself, that, in infinite goodness and mercy, so qualifies the hearts and minds of mankind, that we are made capable of knowing him, and of being united to him, and enjoying him, through that blessed medium which he, in his divine wisdom and goodness, hath been pleased to prepare.

And all that are come to any competent degree of understanding, thinking, and consideration, may conclude, that since the Creator hath produced and appointed some things agreeable unto us, as his creatures, in which we have great pleasure and delight, lawful and allowable,

allowable, as objects and subjects both of our senses and understandings; how much greater pleasure and satisfaction, and more permanent and certain, must there be in the knowledge and enjoyment of the Creator himself, who is the root and fulness of all divine pleasure unspeakable, and endureth unchangeably for ever?

The sensible pleasures created of God, and given unto man in this life (not the false and counterfeit ones forged by man) though agreeable to his nature and state, and justly and reasonably proportioned and bounded, are but for a short season, and attended with such degrees of alloy, as often render them null: but when God is pleased so to qualify the mind of man, that the Creator himself becomes the chief, if not only, object of his love, desire, and contemplation, then man finds in the Lord all that his heart could desire or think, and more abundantly, according to a saying of an experienced man of God, "Eye hath not seen," (saith he) "nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And if we love God, we shall likewise love mankind in the same love; for I remember what an apostle of the Lord Christ said, treating on that subject, "If a man loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen."

Now what way, and by what means, shall we mortals attain to this experimental knowledge of God, so needful and desirable, as the perfection

fection and establishment of our being? For when we look upon the heavens and the earth, and things that therein are, so far as we can behold them, reasoning from the effects to the cause, we conclude that he is, and that he is the cause of all things, and we cannot do otherwise as rational beings. And, contemplating God, we must needs determine, as intelligent creatures, that he hath all those divine attributes we commonly attribute unto him: as that he is an eternal, incomprehensible spirit, or mind, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, all good, and unchangeable: and that he hath all those moral characters usually ascribed to him in the holy scriptures, as righteousness, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, faithfulness; where also, after the manner of men, even the affections and passions of mortals are ascribed to him, as anger, hatred, fury, revenge, jealousy, as also corporeal parts and shapes, as head, arms, hands, feet; whereas those human properties and parts (considered as in man) are not really and formally in God, but in the creatures by whom he worketh.

But though the earth sets forth his handy work, and the heavens his power and glory; and though the holy scriptures report of the most high, those things that are true, yet all this (as to us mortals) is but an historical account, or a report; for we still remain, in point of experience, ignorant of him of whom it is thus declared, though we have believed it as we ought. We are at a distance still, there is a vast chasm, and as a fixed gulf between the
 Creator

Creator and us, all these things notwithstanding.

The scripture declares, as from the mouth of Christ, that God is a spirit, and we believe it; but who can conceive any proper idea of a spirit by the word, what he is, and how he appears to the mind? He is only known to the mind by his own influences, through a holy medium of his own adapting; by the sensible operation and effects of his wisdom and power there. And as every object exhibits its own proper idea to the eye, and declares itself thereby in the light, as a proper and necessary medium of seeing, without which we could not have formed any idea of things at all; so likewise we can form no idea of God, but what he himself is pleased to give, and in what manner, and by what medium soever he makes himself known; and is to all mankind whatever he pleases to appear to be, and that is according to the various states of men: and to the faithful, holy, sincere, and obedient, he is love; but to the unfaithful, unclean, hypocrites and disobedient, he is a consuming fire and destroyer; and we are one to another whatever he thinks proper to make us.

And I give you a simile in the works of God; that as we can form no idea of the body of the sun in the firmament of heaven, but what himself exhibits, nor can we see him but by the efflux of his own light, as from its proper center, which darting upon the eye, when in its rectitude, directs it to the object; and as we have no words, or means, by which we can convey

convey a proper idea of light to the understanding of one that is born blind, or the manner of its discovering objects to the sight; even so, there are no words, in any language I am acquainted with, whereby we can convey the idea we conceive of God, by his own act of manifesting to any other, but to such only as have the like ideas from the same manner of appearance in themselves.

We express abundance of words concerning God, and the things of God, very little understood by the greatest part of mankind, to whom we speak; therefore we direct all to the Lord himself, that he may teach them true knowledge and wisdom; the knowledge of himself in a state of retirement, and in the silence of all the imaginations, cogitations, agitations, desires, affections, passions, and hurries of the natural mind, which is ever in action and fluctuating, passing from object to object, till the Almighty, by the manifestation of his eternal word, and the influences of his holy spirit and grace, commands silence in the mind, inspires her with understanding, and works a change there.

God speaks to the understanding by the operation of the word of his divine power, by revealing the things of God, through the in-shining of the eternal light thereof in the mind: and when the most high so qualifies the mind, by his work of sanctification therein, that he himself becomes the only object, and the mind is settled and stayed upon him alone; then, all the creatures of God, and all the enjoyment of
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them, is lost, for a time, and of no regard, in comparison of the great and glorious Creator of all, and the divine and unutterable peace, joy, and consolation found in him, even in this present world, so far as our present mode of being can bear the earnest and sure evidence of the fulness, when time to us here shall be no more.

I now proceed with what is further before me, as I may have assistance by the grace of God, and utterance; for we speak from time to time, those things that are renewed or opened in our minds and understandings, without any particular application to any one: the Lord himself knowing every state, directs matters to particular persons, or to the general, as it may please him.

I say then, that mankind are degenerated, being misled by their own senses and sensual appetites, into the love of the creatures (things without them) and themselves, and so become strangers, and alienated from the life of God, through their own darkness and corruptions; and peradventure the greatest part of all that are here have been so, as well as myself: yet still we find something in ourselves, admonishing us of our mistakes, in our course through this world; and we ought to reflect, and consider what this is, which many times surprises us with the remembrance of things past, which we had forgot for some years.

This is one who has wrote down all our failings, as it were, in his book; and he opens
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the leaves thereof, and shews us all the errors of our lives, and brings every thing to remembrance in our minds and understandings, one thing after another; and then, and not till then, we have a right foundation for repentance and sorrow for sin (for he who never sees his sins, can never repent); and then, as the apostle saith, "Sin becomes exceeding sinful;" they are ever before us, so that the mind becomes thereby heavy laden and oppressed.

And then, and not till then, we mortals are willing to cry for a Saviour; O Lord, a Saviour, or I am undone for ever! How then comes the knowledge of sin? It is through the love of God, who is not willing that any should live and die, and perish therein: it is made manifest by the brightness of that all-discovering holy medium, which the Most High Father of all hath mercifully provided for that great and blessed end; that mankind might be redeemed, made free from sin, and the corruptions of the mind through sensual lusts.

We all must own, that the wisdom of God is Himself, the power of God is Himself, the Spirit of God is Himself: he is that eternal Spirit, and was never without his wisdom and power from everlasting. He, therefore, hath been pleased to assume, and unite unto himself, the whole human nature: not only the intelligent reasonable mind, but also the mortal part of man, which is the body, by which he might come near unto mankind, in our own nature and likeness, under the character and name of Jesus Christ, who in the Holy Scripture

ture is called the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God; and by John the Evangelist, is called the Word of God, by whom the world was made, and all things that therein are. And, I conclude none is so weak as to think the body of Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God, but a miraculous effect of that cause, and as the apostle compares it, is as a veil, whereby he veiled his divine nature, for a time, from every eye.

And the human mind, or reasonable soul of Christ, is likewise a veil, but of a more excellent kind than the body, though congenial with the intellectual mind of mankind, "for he was
" in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," according to the language of holy writ.

God dwelleth in inaccessible divine light, which no eye can penetrate, which no soul can with open face behold; therefore the Lord hath condescended to veil his glory, by assuming a human mind, essentially united unto himself, thereby accommodating him so to the mind of man, as to appear, and be manifested therein. And he who thus appears, is the true God, as it is written, "God, who in the beginning commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath
" shined into our hearts, to give us the light of
" the knowledge of the glory of God, in the
" face (or appearance) of Jesus Christ."

In the minds of mankind, he discovers to our understandings whatever is proper for us to know of himself, or our duty towards him, and one
toward

toward another. The Lord begins with small things, wherein if we are faithful and obedient, he makes more and more of himself, and the enjoyment of his divine presence and goodness, and his just and holy ways known unto us; but if we err and disobey, though but in small things, the mind is oppressed thereby, till we return and amend.

This is the beginning of the manifestation of the law of the spirit of life, which makes free from the law of sin and death, the revelation of the mind of Christ. He manifests in the minds of mankind such things as are proper, according to our several degrees and capacities, beginning with little, low things, as a schoolmaster, till we are capable of more, and then gradually he opens in us the mysteries of his kingdom. He that hates instruction, hates the instructor, according to what he saith under the character of wisdom: "How long, ye simple
 " ones, will ye love simplicity, and ye fools,
 " hate knowledge! Turn ye at my reproof, and
 " I will pour forth of my Spirit upon you."

Therefore hear the reproof of instruction in your minds and understandings, that the spirit of wisdom may be poured forth upon you; that you may first become proficient, and perfect in all moral righteousness and duties, by the dictates of this wisdom, which, if we despise and refuse, we never can attain; and then, as the Lord Jesus hath said: "If you have not
 " been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,
 " who will make you rulers over greater
 " riches!"

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If men are not righteous and just one toward another in temporal things, how can they expect the divine influences of the immortal spirit and power of God, the true and eternal riches? If we are not faithful to the discoveries and dictates of the law of the spirit of life, the light of the divine word manifested in our minds, how can we expect to experience the effusion of divine love in our hearts, which is the greatest blessing and highest attainment human kind are capable of in this life? This is that eternal life, this is the grace of God which is come by Christ, and is of an everliving nature; but if man refuses this, and goes on from one evil to another, he rejects that eternal life, and by degrees degenerates more and more, till he becomes altogether sensual as a brute beast: as it is written, "The spirit of a beast goes downward, but the spirit of a man goes upward." For the man that ascends by degrees of virtue and holiness, one degree after another, till he comes to be united unto God, through Christ, the blessed medium, in whom is the fulness of all divine virtue, that soul hath the enjoyment of the divine presence in this world, in a manner not to be expressed by the language of men or angels.

In this great city there are many temptations and opportunities to hurtful things; and I have sometimes considered the youth among us to be in great danger of corruption thereby. But the Holy Spirit of God strives with you, and would gather every soul to himself; O therefore consider yourselves, and know your own inclina-

inclinations, thoughts, and imaginations! what they are upon, what they are seeking after, whereunto they tend, whether towards good or evil, to the right hand or to the left, the broad or narrow way.

Some are so bent towards the mean, low, and fordid pleasures of an animal and sensual life, that they could even wish, for the sake thereof, that they had no future state; and some are ready to wish, Oh! that I were but as that little bird upon the tree, that I might go where I please, and do what I will, without any account of my actions in this world, or another, if there be any yet to come! There is nothing more dreadful, and to which a reasonable, thinking mind is more averse, than to remain without the knowledge of God, and not to believe a future state. I have often thought any tolerable being is better than none at all; I would therefore have your minds so ennobled, as to contemplate the Divine Being, consider the great Creator, and how much better it is to be acquainted with him, become like him, and to live for ever with him, and in his favour, than to be annihilated. It is no small matter, indeed, to be acquainted with God, so as to be united unto him; it is the greatest advancement that the nature of man is capable of.

As concerning moral precepts, and all the commandments of God, they are given altogether for our good, and it is our highest interest to observe them.—It is the good pleasure of God, that mankind should live socially and amicably, and therefore he hath given us so-

cial precepts; and, that we may be able to do them, he hath breathed into our souls the breath of life from himself. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart of man, it raises the soul to God, as its first and chief object; and then likewise it flows forth toward mankind, in every duty of friendship and kindness; and heaven will be upon earth, when that part of the prayer which Christ taught his disciples is come to pass: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Though many are daily using these words, and seeming to pray, and yet do not believe that it ever can be: "and what is not of faith is sin." But if it had not been possible, and the mind and purpose of the Father, that mankind should, in due time, be advanced into such a state in this life, as to do the will of God on earth, so far as made manifest and required, and according to the mode and end of their being here, Christ would *not have* taught his disciples to pray after this manner. Those will be glorious days indeed, and if we can attain to that state in our time, we shall be examples to others our cotemporaries, and those that may succeed us in ages yet to come.

All the angels of God in heaven, the seraphims, and cherubims, and spirits of just men made perfect there, the general assembly, and church of the first born, continually do the will of God, and rejoice without ceasing, in beholding the face of their Heavenly Father, their Creator; they surrender their crowns at the feet of God, and the Lamb, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind.

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We are satisfied and certain of the truth of the being of God, by the works of his creation without us, and by our own existence, as not originally self-productive. Let us not rest here, but also seek after the knowledge of God, that we may be acquainted with him, and enjoy his divine presence, in a state of reconciliation and acceptance with him, which is not by any thing that we ourselves, of ourselves, can do, but by the work of God in us.

The first work of God in man, in order to this knowledge, is, to convince him of the errors of life, and of his ignorance, by his divine light, wisdom, or power; and the first work of the mind of man is, to believe, trust, and confide therein, as its immediate object; as it is written, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom God hath sent." Again, "Believe in the light, that you may be children of light:" that is, children of God, who is that light. It is necessary, therefore, that mankind first believe in the divine convincing power, or Christ working in themselves. As it is also said, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, of two making one new man, and so making peace."

Many are upon the wing in this present age, flying from the divine truth, which they reject, and laying hold of their own reason, as sufficient for them in the things of God, and knowledge of him. Dost thou think, friend, that thy reason is the eternal, divine word and wisdom of God, by whom the worlds were made? Thou wilt hardly adventure to say so, upon a
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solid thought. Thy reason, if thou knowest what it is, thou wilt find to be a constituent part or property of thy own being, as a creature, thou canst not be a man without it, and thy understanding. Thy reason or understanding is a property essential to thyself, not self-informing nor self-sufficient in the knowledge of God, of whom thy reason can form no idea adequate to his eternal being. Thou must be under the dictates of a superior, and not thyself. He who informs, and he who is informed, are not the same: the Creator is not the creature, nor is the creature the Creator: thou, with thy reason, art a creature, and a weak one too; the Divine informing Light, and Wisdom, the Eternal Logos, (what words shall I use to be understood?) is thy Creator; thou must learn of him, and not of thyself; thou must deny thyself, and be his disciple. It is he that inspires the understanding with divine knowledge and wisdom.

The Lord God is eternal unapproachable light, and thou, with all thy reasoning, and self-agitation, and cogitation, art darkness, untill he himself arise in thee, as the brightness of seven days, and give thee light and understanding.

The divine wisdom and power is distinct from all creatures. I know very well what I say, and therefore I speak it boldly; for I had reason, and could reason as other men, concerning God, and the things of God, of whom I had heard and read; and spoke against *this way*, before I knew what it was, as many now do,

do, and before I knew the truth of God as a director of mankind, or that the Lord Jesus Christ is that truth and informer.

Some men argue very perversely by their reason, or what they call so; which being baffled and depraved through sensual lusts, is enslaved and made subservient to the accomplishment of them, so that they mean sensuality when they say reason.

Now I would have all you young ones to be careful and circumspect, for it is for your sakes that I am thus concerned at this time, that you may all trust in the living God, and not lean to your own understandings, as natural creatures, but embrace the truth freely, and be not ashamed of the heart-tendering work of it in you: for he that is ashamed of the work and word of God, rejects it, and that eternal life that comes by him; and of him will the Lord be ashamed, and will reject him in that day, when all nations shall stand before the dreadful throne of his eternal judgment, to receive sentence and reward, according as their works have been.

I would have you consider, therefore, your own minds, with all the faculties and properties of them, and your own thoughts, and know them, and what you receive for truth in that ground: seek for a more certain and excellent guide and director, something that can inform your understandings with certainty, that will rectify all errors in you, and bring you forth in his own image, in the nature of the
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Lord Jesus Christ: your minds will then come to be invested, endued, and adorned with all the powers of the cross, against your animal corruptions; the sweet properties and qualities of the human nature of the Son of God you will be partakers of, and of the divine nature in him: you will love God above all, you will love all mankind, and hate none: you will be social, for in the Son of God are all the perfections of the human nature exalted and glorified, and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the fulness of the Godhead substantially or essentially. I shall therefore direct, and leave you unto him. Look to your own standing and perseverance, that so you may be united unto God, that he may become your life, and you live in him, and with him, for evermore. To God, therefore, I say, and to the word of his grace, to the conduct of divine wisdom, love, and goodness, which leadeth in the way of righteousness and holiness, I desire to leave you, and resign myself, that we all may be transformed into the image of God, and sing praises unto him, whilst here in this present world, and in that which is to come, "Thanksgiving, and honour, "dominion, and glory, unto him who is worthy, "both now and to all eternity."

F I N I S.

